

Questioning Tips for the Classroom

This is a list to help you remember some tips we have talked about in the module to help you implement Questioning Techniques in your classroom.

1. Set the tone in the beginning of the year for how you plan to create an environment where everyone's ideas will be heard, and why.
2. Expect students who are used to a very different approach (same few hands up, mainly recall questions, etc.) to need a period of adjustment.
3. Students who are shy or quiet might feel anxious about being called on, students who are used to being called on more often may feel frustrated about sharing the floor. This will pass! After a while, the students will start to see the benefits, even the youngest children.
4. Give students the option to say "I don't know" if they truly are stuck. You might try having them call on the next person, or encourage them to say what's confusing them.
5. Give yourself the necessary time to develop questions as you develop your plans. In the beginning it's okay to come up with one rich question- you'll be surprised at how one thought-provoking question naturally leads to others within a discussion. Don't forget your purpose- learning what your students know at the same time you are providing instruction and scaffolding.
6. Review your standards when developing questions- are they getting at what kids really need deep understanding of?
7. Allow for the possibility that discussions may take more time as they encompass more students.
8. Take notes on discussions as soon as possible to capture specific information about misconceptions and gaps to work on during the next class period.
9. Ask a colleague to observe a class discussion in order to get feedback on what you need to work on.
10. Start with what you can manage. You'll make larger gains from a small change that you implement consistently than from a few techniques that you don't have the time to fully develop.

Don't forget, it's easy to believe that your students are "getting it" when only a few really respond in depth to discussion questions in class. When the summative assessment rolls around, you want to know that ALL your students "get it."